

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 29, 2024

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden Jr.
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

The Honorable Kamala Harris
Vice President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Biden and Vice President Harris,

We respectfully request that you roundly condemn the actions of the Maduro regime regarding the July 28, 2024 “elections” in Venezuela, and swiftly impose sweeping, robust sanctions on the regime as well as targeted sanctions on individuals responsible for subverting Venezuela’s once democratic system.

The Maduro regime came to power in the wake of Hugo Chavez’s death, and was congealed with an “election” in 2018 that was neither free nor fair. Consequently, the European Union and the Council of the European Union, the Organization of American States, the Lima Group, and several other countries, including the United States, independently refused to recognize the results of this sham election. The Maduro regime intimidated and repressed the opposition, refused to allow certain candidates to run, and censored the media in the run-up to the election. As a result, numerous respected international organizations refused to even observe the process, citing numerous flaws and irregularities aimed to secure a Maduro victory. It was no surprise when, after Maduro himself set the terms, the candidates, and the vote-counting for his “election,” that he declared himself the victor once polls closed.

Similarly, the Maduro regime ensured that the 2024 “elections” were neither free nor fair. The main opposition candidate Maria Corina Machado, who won a decisive primary, was prohibited from running, and her chosen successor Corina Yoris was also barred. The “Barbados Agreement,” which the opposition Unitary Platform and Maduro regime signed in October 2023, and which was facilitated by your administration with sanctions relief on Venezuela’s lucrative gold and petrol industries, was blatantly violated by the Maduro regime as it continued to harass, intimidate, and imprison members of the opposition. The negotiations leading up to the agreement bought the Maduro regime valuable time – as “dialogue” with tyrants typically does – and duped many that the upcoming elections might be free and fair.

Despite the crushing repression, we were awed by the resolve and courage shown by the Venezuelan people yesterday. Many stood in line for hours to demand change, some standing up to the intimidation tactics of the Maduro regime. However, it should surprise no one that the Maduro regime has not surrendered power willingly, and that yesterday’s charade produced the only result that a dictator would allow: continuation of his brutal grip on power. And perhaps equally predictable, his regime initiated a vindictive “criminal investigation” of opposition leader Maria Corina Machado one day after the “election.”

The Venezuelan people deserve more than the failed tyranny of the Maduro dictatorship, including a fair count of their votes, and an electoral process free from intimidation which allows their chosen candidates to run. Shamefully, the will of the Venezuelan people has not been respected throughout this sham process. Until then, the only dialogue should be how to facilitate Maduro's swift and absolute exit. Accordingly, and within all applicable rules and regulations, we respectfully request that you stand with the Venezuelan people and impose tough sanctions on the Maduro regime, as well as those individuals responsible for circumventing the will of the Venezuelan people throughout the 2023-2024 campaign.

Sincerely,



Mario Diaz-Balart
Member of Congress



Maria Elvira Salazar
Member of Congress



Carlos A. Gimenez
Member of Congress